

tangible, non-transitory electronically accessible memory coupled to the at least one electronic controller and containing program code executable by the at least one electronic controller for:

- (a) operating the gaming machines in a first mode in which wager results of a primary game are presented in a primary display area, and wager results have a chance of including bonus events including a presentation on a secondary display area of the one or displays;
- (b) in response to a gaming mode change event, operating a set of two or more of the gaming machines in a second group gaming mode in which the secondary display areas of the set of gaming machines include a common, persistent game board with a plurality of prize objects, the second group gaming mode comprising:
  - obtaining primary game results for wager activations at the set of gaming machines, the primary game results having a chance to include a prize amount;
  - providing selected primary game results at least partially in the game board by awarding at least one of the prize objects and an associated prize amount to one of the group of gaming machines to provide the primary game result prize amount;
  - for each prize object awarded, causing a message to be sent to the other gaming machines of the set that the at least one prize object has been taken, displaying an indication at the other gaming machines of the set that the at least one prize object is no longer available, and removing it from the game board; and
  - when a prize object is awarded, maintaining available prize distributions of the primary game for all gaming machines in the set.

9. The gaming machine of claim 8, further comprising maintaining the game board with a service running on a server coupled to the group of gaming machines over a network, the service receiving messages from the gaming machines in the set indicating that prize objects have been awarded, and in response recording that the prize objects have been taken and sending messages to the other gaming machines that the prize objects have been taken.

- 10. The gaming machine of claim 9, further comprising:
  - at the service running on the server, determining to start the second group gaming mode and causing the gaming mode change event to occur at the set of gaming machines; and
  - at the service running on the server, determining to end the second group gaming mode and causing another game mode change event to occur at the set of gaming machines.

11. The gaming machine of claim 8, wherein the second group gaming mode further comprises, in response to obtaining one of the primary game results, determining that the prize amount is equal to an award of a prize object that has already been taken, and selecting two or more alternative ones of the prize objects to be awarded for said primary game result.

12. The gaming machine of claim 8, wherein the second group gaming mode further comprises determining that all of the prize objects have been taken and, in response, providing a second common, persistent game board at the secondary display areas of the set of gaming machines with a plurality of additional prize objects available to be awarded similarly to the prize objects.

13. The gaming machine of claim 8, wherein the second group gaming mode further comprising, in response to a designated one of the prize objects being awarded at a selected one of the set of gaming machines, changing a graphic theme of the second group gaming mode at the selected gaming machine while maintaining the game board at the selected gaming machine.

14. The gaming machine of claim 8, wherein the selected primary game results are primary game results which would be entitled to a bonus event if occurring in the first mode.

15. A tangible, non-transitory computer readable medium holding a program product for execution by a controller of a gaming machine having one or more video displays, the program product including machine instructions for:

- operating a credit input device in communication with the controller to accept a physical item associated with a monetary value and, in response, establishing a player credit balance;

- controlling a plurality of player-activated input devices in communication with the controller for activating wagers and setting wagers covered by the credit balance;

- operating the gaming machines in a first mode in which wager results of a primary game are presented in a primary display area, and wager results have a chance of including bonus events including a presentation on a secondary display area of the one or displays;

- in response to a gaming mode change event, operating a set of two or more of the gaming machines in a second group gaming mode in which secondary display areas of the set of gaming machines include a common, persistent game board with a plurality of prize objects, the second group gaming mode comprising:

- obtaining primary game results for wager activations at the set of gaming machines, the primary game results having a chance to include a prize amount;

- providing selected primary game results at least partially in the game board by awarding at least one of the prize objects and an associated prize amount to one of the group of gaming machines to provide the primary game result prize amount;

- for each prize object awarded, causing a message to be sent to the other gaming machines of the set that the at least one prize object has been taken, displaying an indication at the other gaming machines of the set that the at least one prize object is no longer available, and removing it from the game board; and

- when a prize object is awarded, maintaining available prize distributions of the primary game for all gaming machines in the set.

16. The computer readable medium holding a program product of claim 15, further comprising maintaining the game board with a service running on a server coupled to the group of gaming machines over a network, the service receiving messages from the gaming machines in the set indicating that prize objects have been awarded, and in response recording that the prize objects have been taken and sending messages to the other gaming machines that the prize objects have been taken.

17. The computer readable medium holding a program product of claim 16, further comprising: